

Message Text

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16

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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R 050810Z OCT 76

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2235

INFO USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

FBIS OKINAWA

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 11612

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT CH

SUBJECT: MEDIA ARTICLES POINT TO CONTINUING FACTIONAL PROBLEMS

REF: (A) HONG KONG 11578 (B) HONG KONG 11577

(C) PEKING 1964

1. AS REFTELS HAVE INDICATED, A NUMBER OF SIGNS IN THE CHINESE MEDIA INDICATE THAT POLICY DIFFERENCES, INCLUDING THE STATUS OF THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST TENG HSIAO-PING AND THE FUTURE ROLE OF POLITICAL ACTIVISM, CONTINUE TO PLAGUE THE CHINESE LEADERSHIP. IN THE PAST FEW WEEKS, WE HAVE SEEN:

--A SEPTEMBER 29 POLEMICAL PEOPLE'S DAILY ARTICLE FIERCELY ATTACKING THOSE WHO ARE ATTEMPTING TO CHANGE THE "PRINCIPLES LAID DOWN" BY CHAIRMAN MAO AND SOUNDING THE CALL TO CARRY ON THE STRUGGLE AGAINST CAPITALIST ROADERS "NO MATTER WHO THEY ARE" (REF C);

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--SEVERAL PROVINCIAL BROADCASTS, INCLUDING THOSE FROM LIAONING AND INNER MONGOLIA ON SEPTEMBER 29, ATTACKING ATTEMPTS TO "BETRAY, DESTROY, DISTORT, EMASCULATE, AND TAMPER WITH MAO TSE-TUNG THOUGHT" AND STRESSING THE NEED TO LAUNCH A PROTRACTED AND REPEATED "STRUGGLE AGAINST TENG AND HIS REVISIONIST LINE;

--APPARENT PROBLEMS WITH THE SEPTEMBER 16 JOINT EDITORIAL FOR ITS OVEREMPHASIS ON UNITY AND PLACING MAO THOUGHT ON A PAR WITH THE WRITINGS OF OTHER NON-CHINESE COMMUNIST THEORETICIANS (REF B);

--A MIXED PROVINCIAL RESPONSE TO DOCUMENTS RELATING TO MAO'S DEATH AND THE OCTOBER 1 NATIONAL DAY EDITORIAL SUGGESTING CONFUSION OVER SIGNALS FROM PEKING (REF A);

--SEVERAL OCTOBER RED FLAG ARTICLES, ESPECIALLY ONE BY CHENG YUEH, WHICH STRONGLY URGED THE CONTINUATION OF THE STRUGGLE AGAINST "CAPITALIST ROADERS IN POWER IN THE PARTY", LANGUAGE REMINISCENT OF THE EARLIER STAGES OF THE TENG CAMPAIGN WHEN OTHER PRC LEADERS APPEARED TO BE COMING UNDER ATTACK;

--A STARTLING REFERENCE IN THE CHENG YUEH RED FLAG ARTICLE TO UNNAMED INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ATTEMPTING TO "REVERSE THE VERDICTS ON TENG HSIAO-PING."

2. WHILE LEADERSHIP APPEARANCES IN CONNECTION WITH MAO'S FUNERAL AND NATIONAL DAY ACTIVITIES GAVE THE IMPRESSION OF UNITY AND OTHER MEDIA ARTICLES CONTINUE TO EMPHASIZE PARTY CONTROL AND PRODUCTION THEMES, THE POLEMICAL ARTICLES NOTED ABOVE PROBABLY REFLECT CONTINUING DIFFERENCES OVER PERSONALITIES AND ISSUES AT THE PROVINCIAL AS WELL AS NATIONAL LEVEL. FROM MID-AUGUST TO JUST AFTER MAO'S DEATH, THE TENOR OF MOST ARTICLES WAS LESS STRIDENT, MORE GENERAL, AND STRESSED THE NEED TO CARRY ON THE STRUGGLE AGAINST REVISIONISM IN A HISTORICAL RATHER THAN IN A CONTEMPORARY SENSE. IN CONTRAST, THE RECENT ARTICLES, ALTHOUGH NOT AS AUTHORITATIVE AS EDITORIALS, ARE NOTEWORTHY FOR THEIR SHARPNESS AND SPECIFICITY IN TARGETING PROBLEM AREAS AND SUGGEST THAT THE CHINESE LEADERSHIP WILL HAVE INCREASING DIFFICULTY IN BRINGING CONTENTIOUS ELEMENTS

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TOGETHER IN FORGING A POST-MAO CONSENSUS. FURTHER MEDIA SNIPING AGAINST UNNAMED INDIVIDUALS ATTEMPTING TO TONE DOWN POLITICAL ACTIVISM AND OTHER REPORTS OF CONTINUING FACTIONAL PROBLEMS WILL PROBABLY BE SEEN IN UPCOMING WEEKS, UNLESS THE CHINESE LEADERSHIP IS ABLE TO ACT FORCEFULLY IN SORTING OUT ITS DIFFERENCES AND PROVIDE A CLEAR SENSE OF DIRECTION FOR THE CHINESE POLITICAL SYSTEM.

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